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KING CONAN™
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MW KALUTA '83

"Know, O prince, that the man called Conan was all things in his day: a thief, a reaver, a slayer... fierce sellsword and fiercer pirate... and finally, usurper king of proud, civilized Aquilonia, mightiest of Hyborian kingdoms... with his queen Zenobia at his side, and his son Prince Conn ripe to carry on the legend..."

—*The Nemedian Chronicles.*

Stan Lee PRESENTS: KING CONAN

Featuring The Epic Adventurer Created By ROBERT E. HOWARD

BONES AND A BLADE

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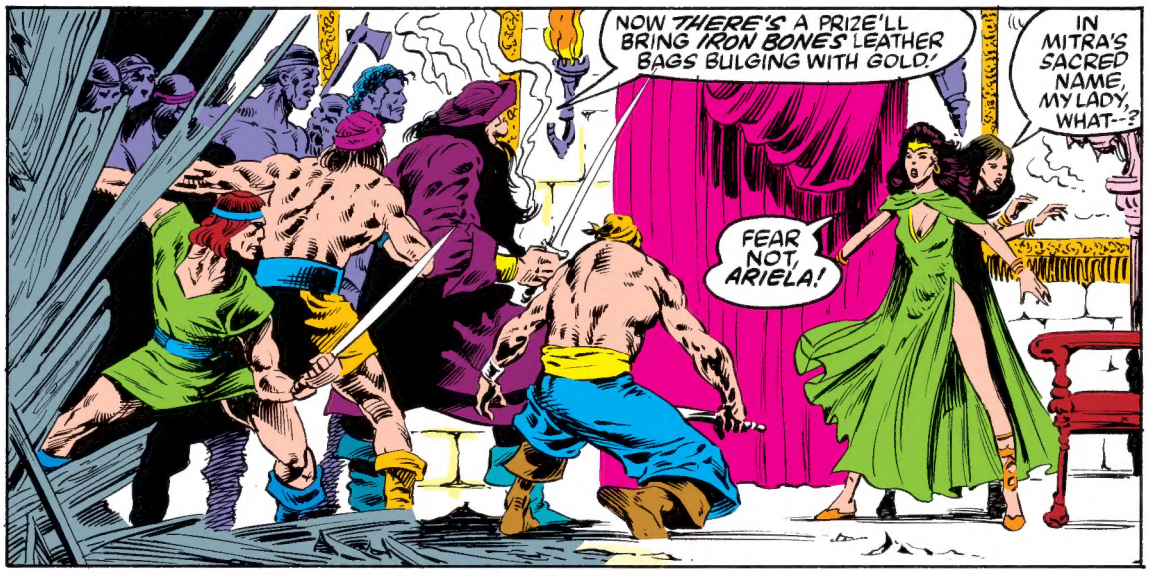
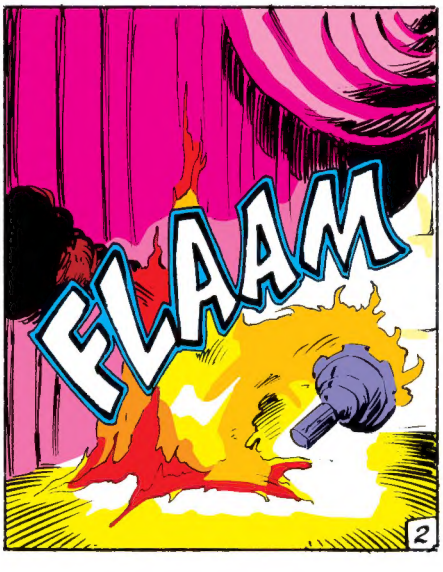

NOW THERE'S A PRIZE'LL BRING IRON BONES' LEATHER BAGS BULGING WITH GOLD!
IN MITRA'S SACRED NAME, MY LADY, WHAT--?
FEAR NOT, ARIELA!

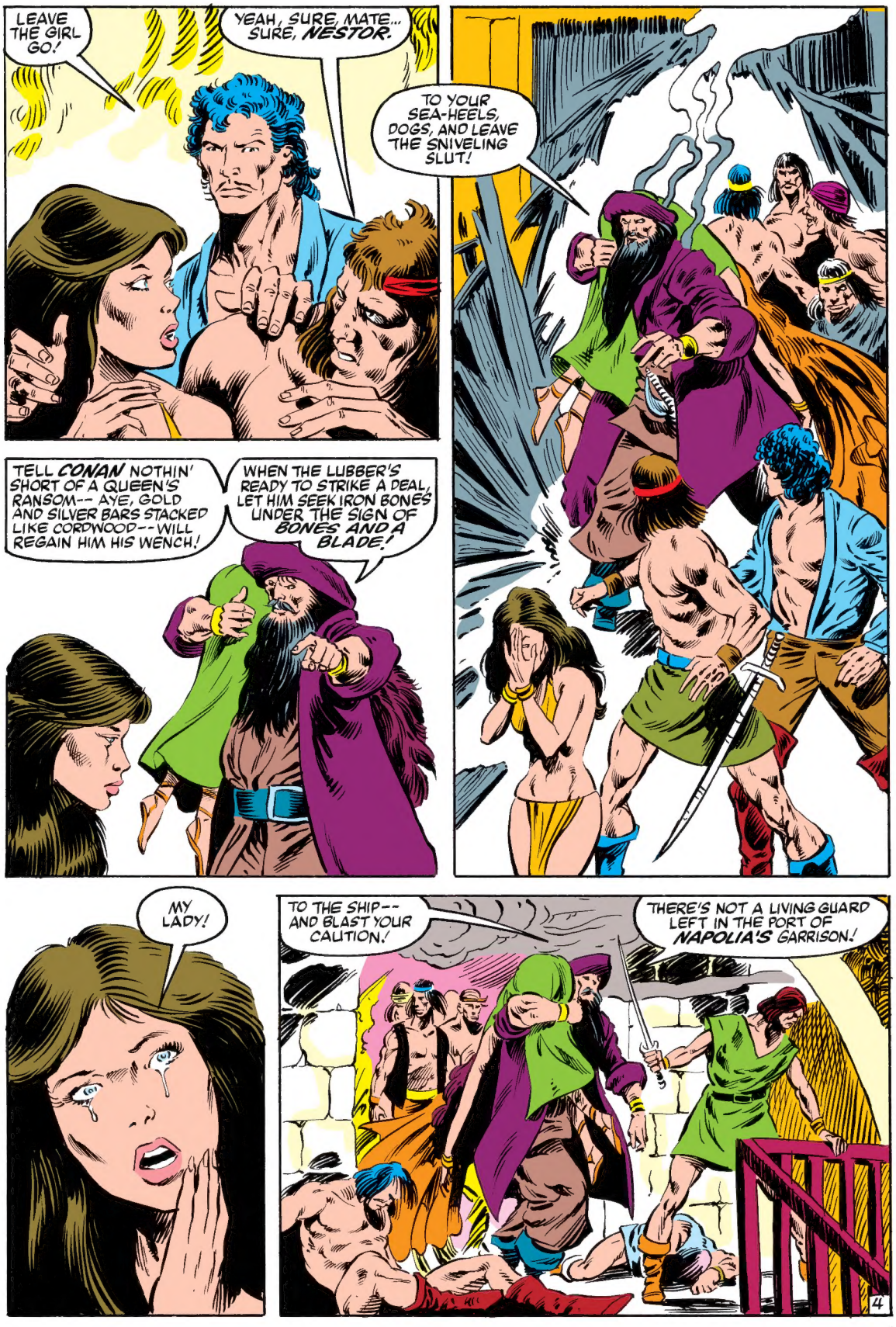
BUT NO-- MISTRESS!
HOW DARE YOU INTRUDE UPON THESE CHAMBERS?!

STAY BACK, YOU BRAZEN MONSTER, FOR I AM ZENOBIA, CONAN'S QUEEN! IF AUGHT HARM BEFALL--

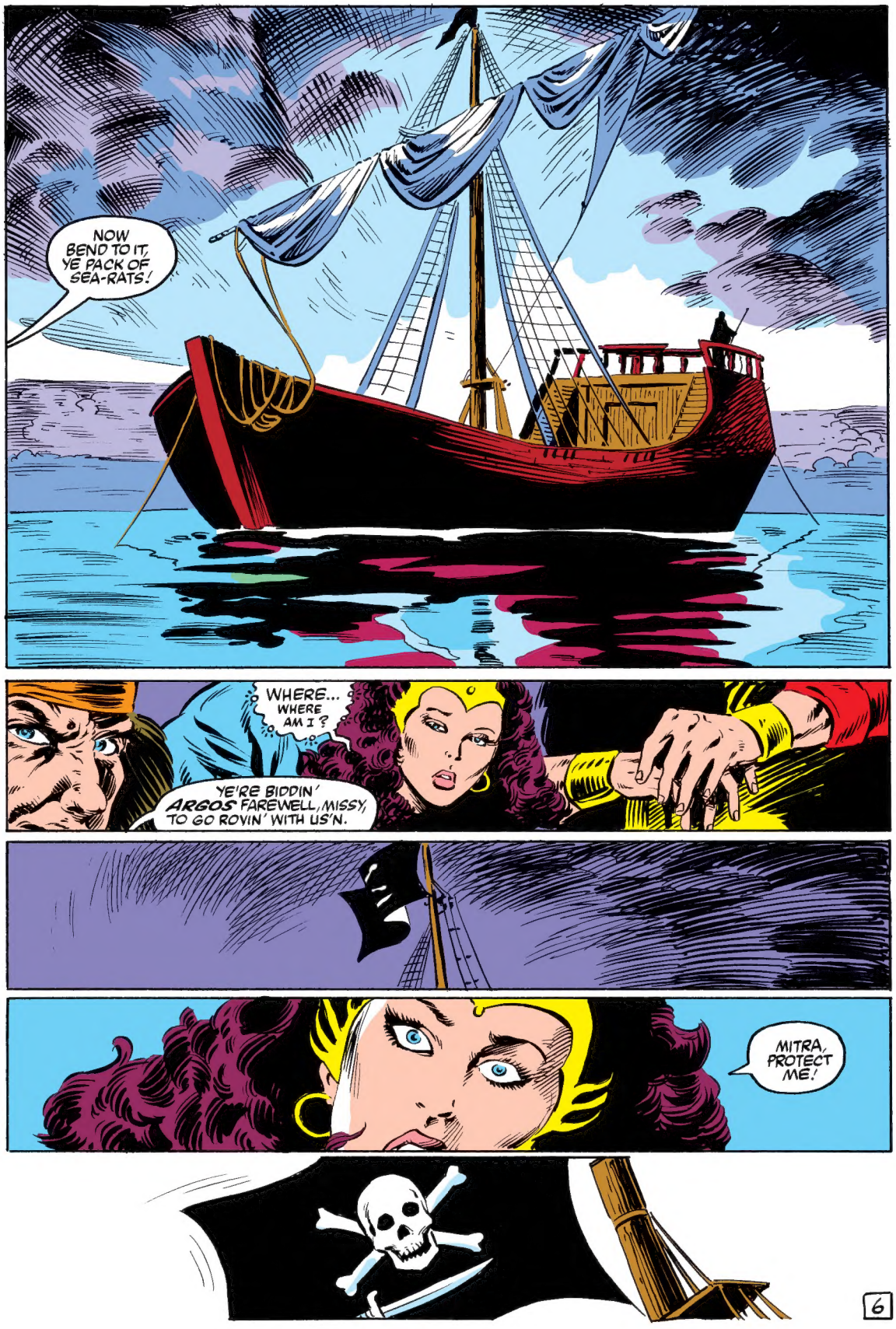
BOOZE ROT ME LIVER IF EVER A MILK-SKINNED WENCH WILL BAR ME WAY!

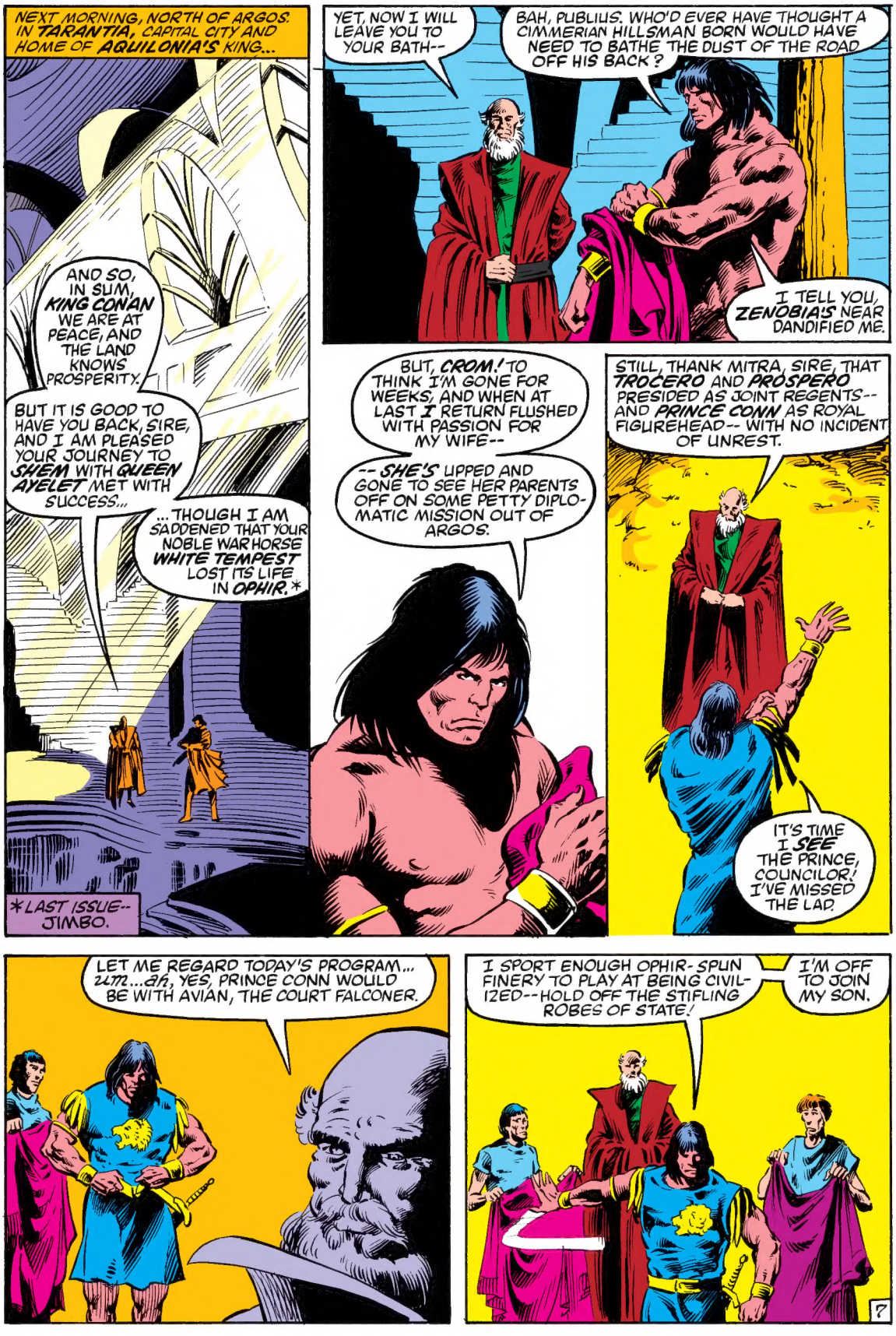

FLAAM
2

NO! I'LL NEVER YIELD!
RUN, ARIELA! SAVE YOURSELF!
YE WRIGGLE LIKE A HERRING IN A NET--
--BUT A GOOD SQUEEZE WILL KNOCK THE WIND FROM YE!
DEVIL! KING CONAN WILL PUT YOU TO THE SWORD FOR THIS!
LET ME GO-- OH!
MMMMMMM-- IT'S BEEN SIX MOONS AND THEN SOME SINCE I HAD ME A WOMAN!
STOP IT! PLEASE!
HUH?
3

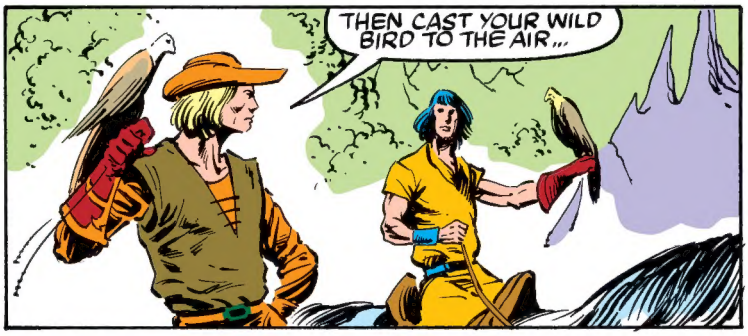

LEAVE THE GIRL GO!
YEAH, SURE, MATE... SURE, NESTOR.
TO YOUR SEA-HEELS, DOGS, AND LEAVE THE SNIVELING SLUT!
TELL CONAN NOTHIN' SHORT OF A QUEEN'S RANSOM-- AYE, GOLD AND SILVER BARS STACKED LIKE CORDWOOD--WILL REGAIN HIM HIS WENCH!
WHEN THE LUBBER'S READY TO STRIKE A DEAL, LET HIM SEEK IRON BONES UNDER THE SIGN OF BONES AND A BLADE!
MY LADY!
TO THE SHIP-- AND BLAST YOUR CAUTION!
THERE'S NOT A LIVING GUARD LEFT IN THE PORT OF NAPOLIA'S GARRISON!
4

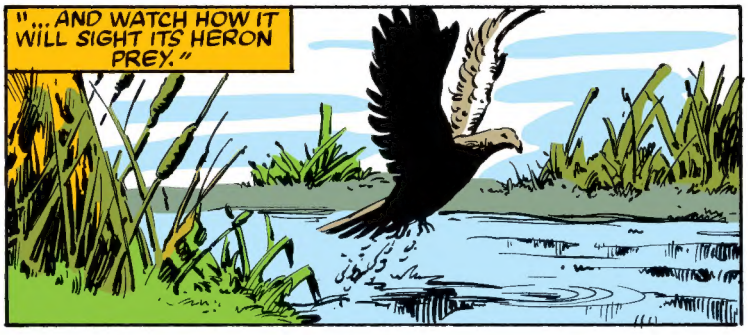
AYE, OUR BLADES HAVE DRUNK THEIR FILL OF LANDMEN'S BLOOD THIS NIGHT!
WELL, HANG ME FROM THE YARDARM IF OUR PRETTY BAGGAGE DOESN'T BRING A HOLDFUL OF TREASURE TO STIR THE GREEN ENVY OF EVERY FREEBOOTER ON THE WESTERN SEA.
5


NOW BEND TO IT, YE PACK OF SEA-RATS!
WHERE... WHERE AM I?
YE'RE BIDDIN' ARGOS FAREWELL, MISSY, TO GO ROVIN' WITH US'N.
MITRA, PROTECT ME!


NEXT MORNING, NORTH OF ARGOS. IN TARANTIA, CAPITAL CITY AND HOME OF AQUILONIA'S KING...
AND SO, IN SUM, KING CONAN WE ARE AT PEACE, AND THE LAND KNOWS PROSPERITY.
BUT IT IS GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK, SIRE, AND I AM PLEASED YOUR JOURNEY TO SHEM WITH QUEEN AYELET MET WITH SUCCESS...
...THOUGH I AM SADDENED THAT YOUR NOBLE WAR HORSE WHITE TEMPEST LOST ITS LIFE IN OPHIR.*
*LAST ISSUE-- JIMBO.
YET, NOW I WILL LEAVE YOU TO YOUR BATH--
BAH, PUBLIUS. WHO'D EVER HAVE THOUGHT A CIMMERIAN HILLSMAN BORN WOULD HAVE NEED TO BATHE THE DUST OF THE ROAD OFF HIS BACK?
I TELL YOU, ZENOBIA'S NEAR DANDIFIED ME.
BUT, CROM! TO THINK I'M GONE FOR WEEKS, AND WHEN AT LAST I RETURN FLUSHED WITH PASSION FOR MY WIFE--
-- SHE'S UPPED AND GONE TO SEE HER PARENTS OFF ON SOME PETTY DIPLOMATIC MISSION OUT OF ARGOS.
STILL, THANK MITRA, SIRE, THAT TROCERO AND PROSPERO PRESIDED AS JOINT REGENTS-- AND PRINCE CONN AS ROYAL FIGUREHEAD-- WITH NO INCIDENT OF UNREST.
IT'S TIME I SEE THE PRINCE, COUNCILOR! I'VE MISSED THE LAD.
LET ME REGARD TODAY'S PROGRAM... um...ah, YES, PRINCE CONN WOULD BE WITH AVIAN, THE COURT FALCONER.
I SPORT ENOUGH OPHIR-SPUN FINERY TO PLAY AT BEING CIVILIZED--HOLD OFF THE STIFLING ROBES OF STATE!
I'M OFF TO JOIN MY SON.
7

MEANWHILE IN THE ROYAL WOODS...
REMEMBER, A GOOD HAWK IS TO BE TREASURED NEXT TO A WAR HORSE, MY PRINCE.
WHY, PRAYERS MUST BE RECITED AT THE SHRINE OF MITRA FOR THE RECOVERY OF A SICK FALCON.
I UNDERSTAND, AVIAN. BUT I WOULD ALREADY LET MY FALCON FLY.


THEN CAST YOUR WILD BIRD TO THE AIR...


"...AND WATCH HOW IT WILL SIGHT ITS HERON PREY."

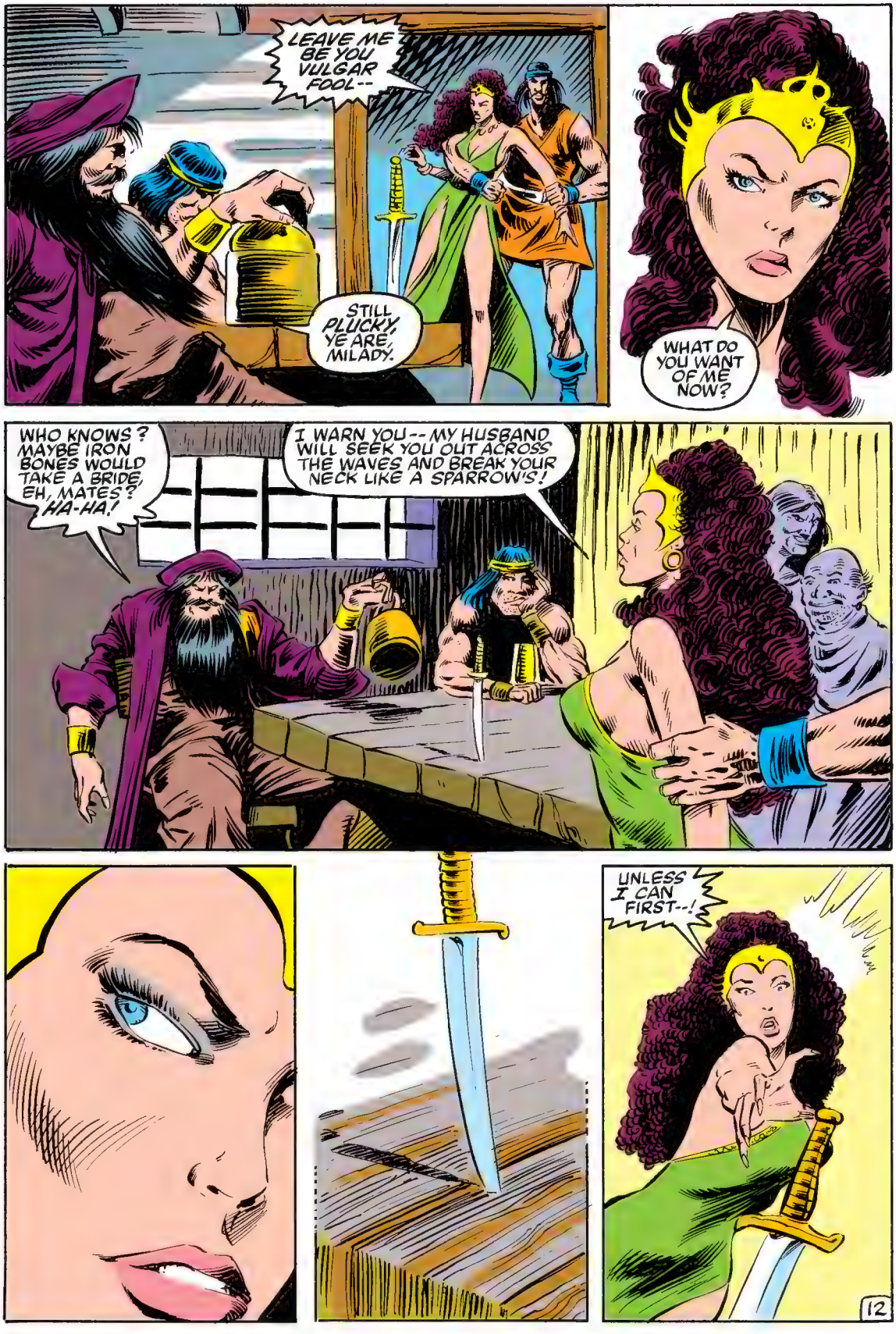
OFF WITH YOU, THEN NOBLE ONE!

8

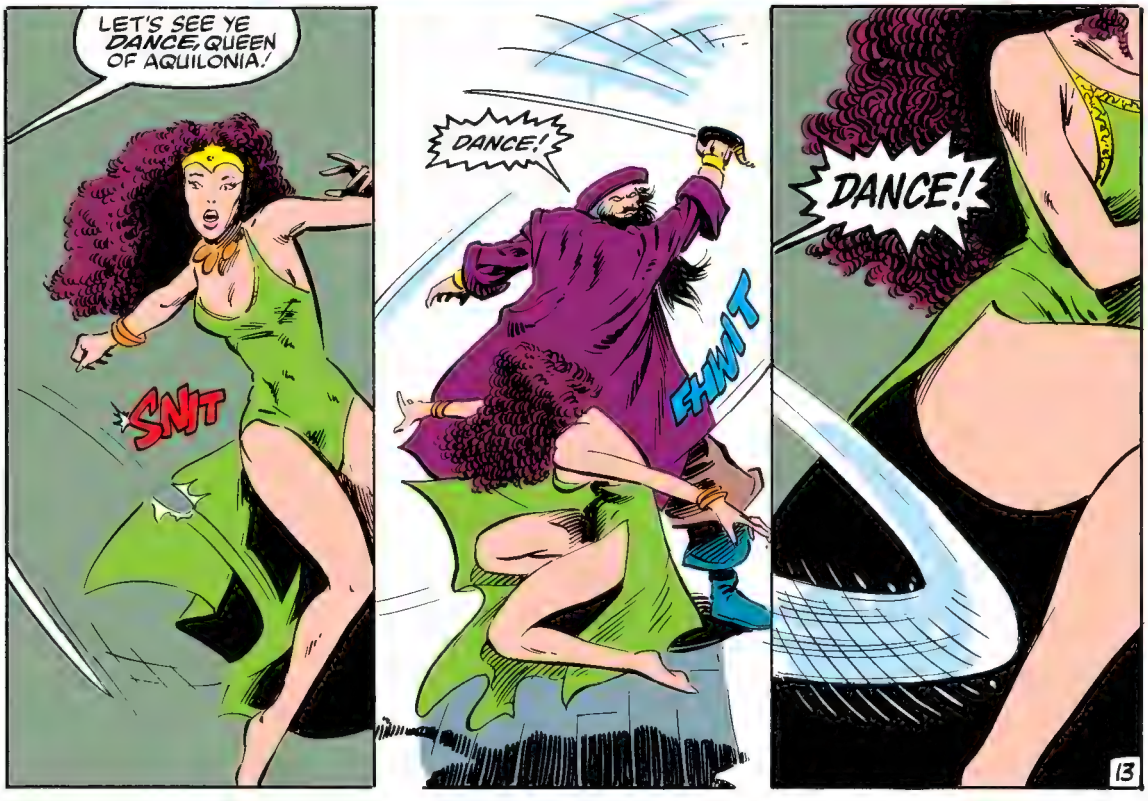
TWEEEEEEE
THE WHISTLE RECALLS YOUR BIRD, MY PRINCE. I TRUST ITS CATCH WILL GRACE THE ROYAL DINNER BOARD.
HO! I'LL TAKE THAT!
WHO--?!
FATHER! WELCOME HOME!
THAT'S A HANDSOM HAWK PERCHES YOUR WRIST, CONN.
AYE! AND AS HANDSOME A BIRD YOU'VE HUNTED.
BUT THEN, THE ROYAL FALCON WOULD HARDLY SEEK A SPARROW AS ITS QUARRY.

SEVERAL DAYS LATER, AS CONAN BUSIES HIMSELF WITH MATTERS OF STATE...
HERE, THE OLDER WOODEN BARRACKS ARE BEING REPLACED WITH STONE, MY LIEGE. THE CURRENT STATE OF PEACE PERMITS US THIS UNDERTAKING.
KING CONAN!
THIS MESSENGER BEARS NEWS OF THE UTMOST URGENCY.
WELL...? SPIT IT OUT, MAN!
MY... MY... SOVEREIGN... MY LORD... THE QUEEN HAS BEEN... ABDUCTED!
CROM'S BLOOD! ZENOBIA?!
THE PIRATE, IRON BONES HOLDS HER FOR RANSOM ON THE WESTERN SEA NEAR THE BARACHAN ISLES!
HEADS WILL ROLL FOR THIS!
THAK
COUNCILOR PUBLIUS--TROCERO AND PROSPERO ARE REGENTS ONCE MORE UNTIL ZENOBIA AND I RETURN!
IF WE SHOULD NOT, THEN CONN'S YOUR NEW KING!

SEVERAL DAYS LATER, ON THE WESTERN OCEAN OFF THE BARACHAN ISLES...
♪ ROW, BULLIES, ROW THE WENCHES OF ARGOS 'AVE GOT US IN TOW! ♪
HA! SEVENS! YE'D BEST QUIT NOW, LEPUS, OR YE'LL WAGER YER BLOODY HAMMOCK NEXT AND FIND YERSELF SLEEPIN' ON THE BARE PLANKS.
'NOTHER BRIMMIN' BUMPER OF PUNCH! HA...!
...AND FETCH ME THE WENCH!
11


LEAVE ME BE YOU VULGAR FOOL--
STILL PLUCKY, YE ARE, MILADY.
WHAT DO YOU WANT OF ME NOW?
WHO KNOWS? MAYBE IRON BONES WOULD TAKE A BRIDE, EH, MATES? HA-HA!
I WARN YOU -- MY HUSBAND WILL SEEK YOU OUT ACROSS THE WAVES AND BREAK YOUR NECK LIKE A SPARROW'S!
UNLESS I CAN FIRST--!
12

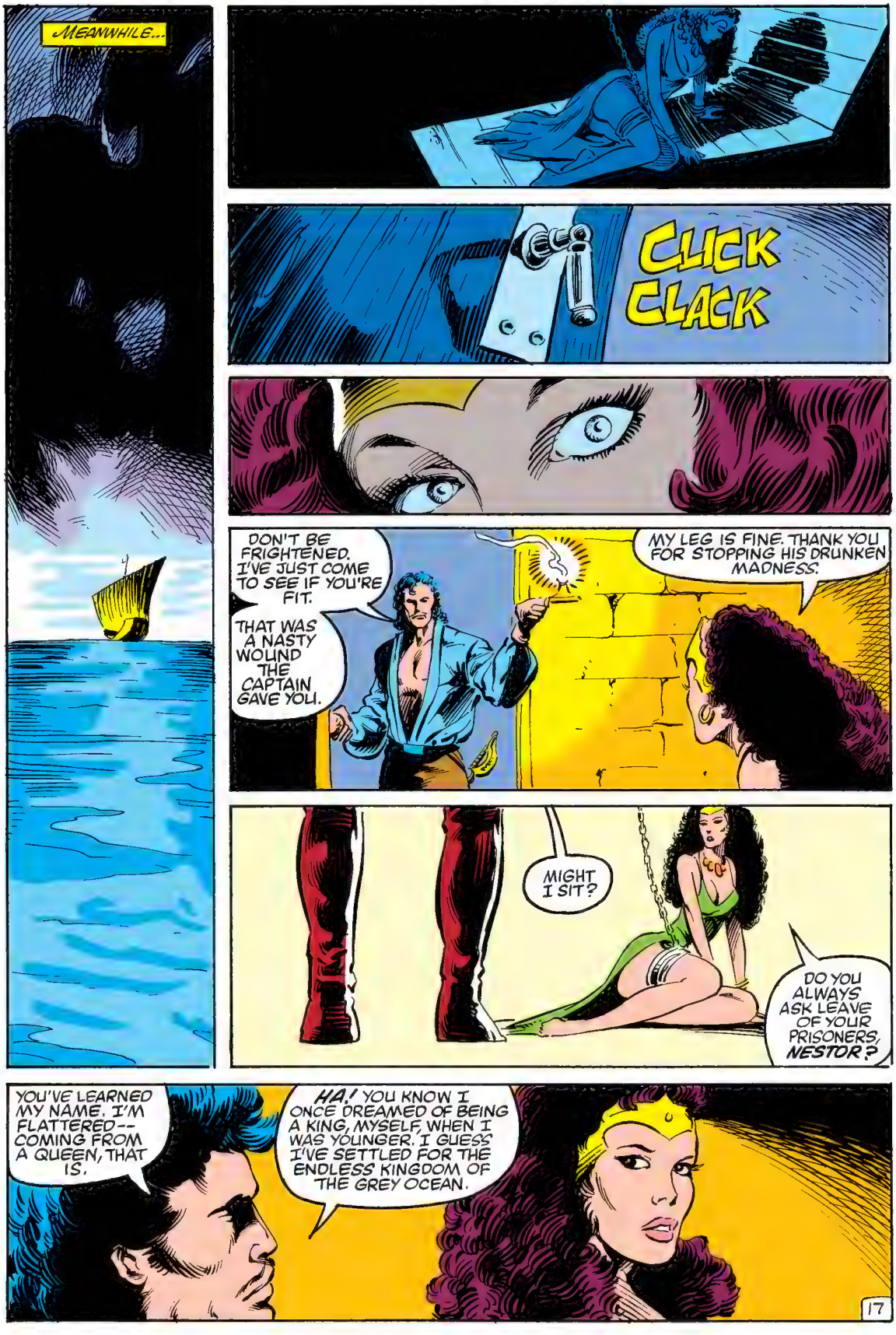
HO! YE'RE A SPARK, YE ARE, WENCH!
BUT I THINK WE CAN SWEAT SOME OF THE...
...SPIRIT OUT OF YE!


LET'S SEE YE DANCE, QUEEN OF AQUILONIA!
SNIT
DANCE!
CHWIT
DANCE!

DANCE!
OH, MY LEG!
SIT
HA HA HA HA HA HA H-
WHAT--?!
NOW GET UP, ME BEAUTY, I SAYS, AND--
14

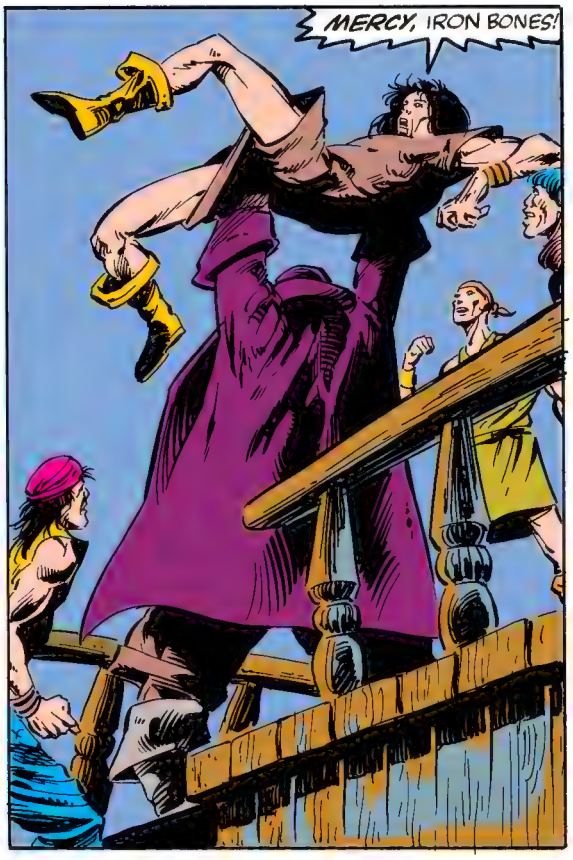
NESTOR?!
ENOUGH, CAPTAIN!
YOU BLOODY SEA-RAT, DO YE DARE--?!
IRON BONES, SHE'LL HARDLY CARRY A QUEEN'S RANSOM IF SHE'S DAMAGED--
Ohhh...
AYE, AYE-- TOO MUCH GROG TO DRINK'S GONE TO ME HEAD.
SHACKLE THE SHE-DOG IN THE HOLD!
15

AT THAT MOMENT, THE SEAPORT OF MESSANTIA, CAPITAL OF ARGOS...
WHICHEVER OF YOU DOGS IS MASTER OF THIS BUCKET, GET HER UNDER WAY!
BUT--
I SAID PUSH OFF!
OR I'LL FEED YOUR GIZZARD TO THE GULLS.
A-A-A-ALL HA-A-ANDS! UP ANCHOR, A-HO-OY!
BUT WHERE WOULD YOU SAIL?
THE OPEN OCEAN.
WE... WE NEVER VENTURE INTO PIRATE WATERS IT'S SAFER TO HUG THE SHORELINE.
NOW! YOU MISBEGOTTEN MONGREL!
AND HOIST THIS STANDARD TO THE WIND!
16

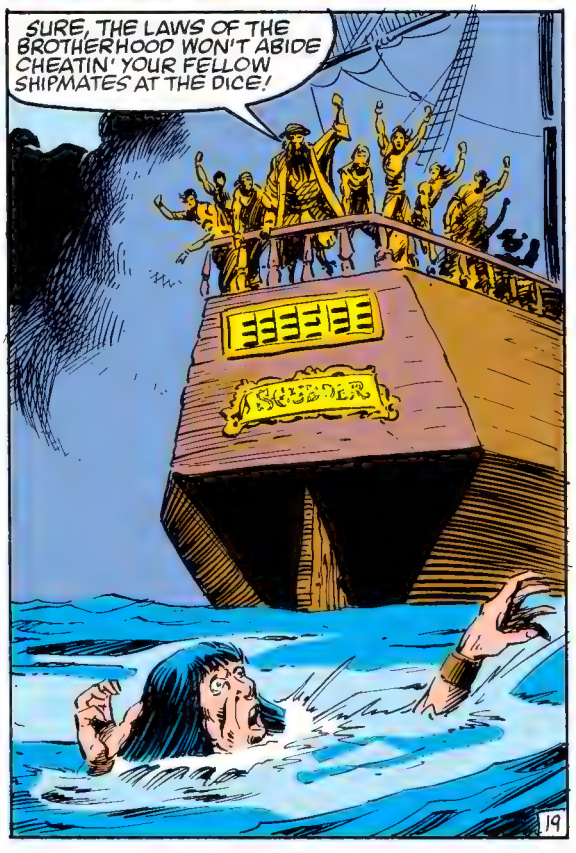

MEANWHILE...
CLICK CLACK
DON'T BE FRIGHTENED. I'VE JUST COME TO SEE IF YOU'RE FIT.
THAT WAS A NASTY WOUND THE CAPTAIN GAVE YOU.
MY LEG IS FINE. THANK YOU FOR STOPPING HIS DRUNKEN MADNESS.
MIGHT I SIT?
DO YOU ALWAYS ASK LEAVE OF YOUR PRISONERS, NESTOR?
YOU'VE LEARNED MY NAME. I'M FLATTERED-- COMING FROM A QUEEN, THAT IS.
HA! YOU KNOW I ONCE DREAMED OF BEING A KING, MYSELF, WHEN I WAS YOUNGER. I GUESS I'VE SETTLED FOR THE ENDLESS KINGDOM OF THE GREY OCEAN.

IT'S A FAR CRY FROM THE THRONE OF MY HOMELAND NEMEDIA.
THERE'S A COINCIDENCE-- NEMEDIA'S WHERE GREW UP.
MY PARENTS WERE OF THE MINOR NOBILITY, FORCED TO FLEE BY THE TYRANT TARASCUS.
AYE, TARASCUS-- THAT SWINE ON THE THRONE IS WHAT DROVE ME TO SEA. THE LAND'S INTOLERABLE UNDER HIS YOKE.
I KNEW THE YOKE WELL. I WAS CAPTURED AND HELD PRISONER IN THE HAREM OF TARASCUS... UNTIL CONAN CAME, MY CHAMPION, AND CARRIED ME AWAY A FREE WOMAN AND HIS BRIDE.
I'M CERTAIN THAT EVEN NOW CONAN SAIL TO MY RESCUE.
HE'D BE A BLIND FOOL WHO WOULDN'T RISK HIS ALL FOR A BEAUTY LIKE ZENOBIA.
BTUMP
THUMP
18

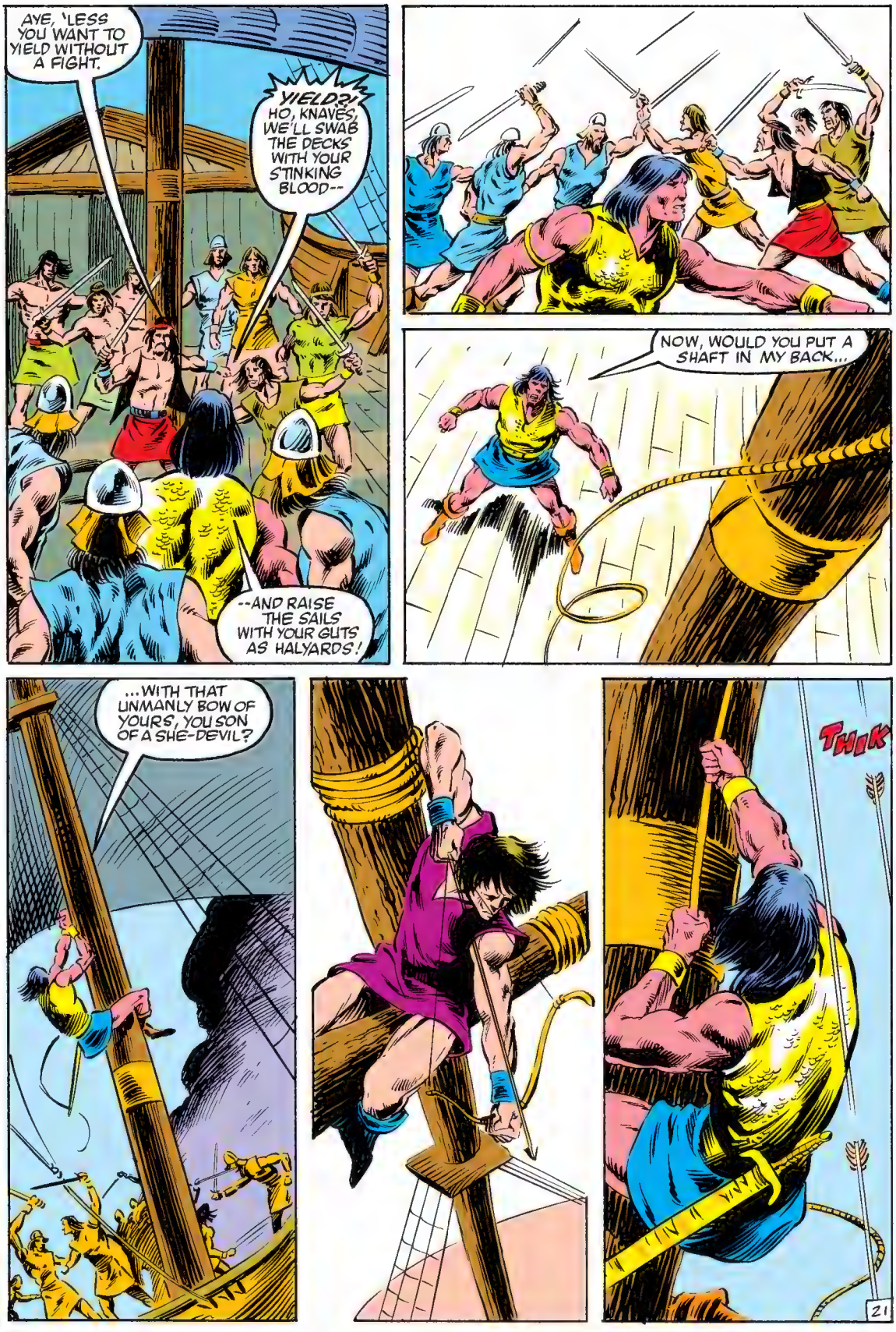
THAT'LL LEARN HIM TO PLAY FALSE THE BROTHERS OF THE COAST!


MERCY, IRON BONES!

LET THE SHARKS SHOW THE LIKES OF YE MERCY!
NO!


SURE, THE LAWS OF THE BROTHERHOOD WON'T ABIDE CHEATIN' YOUR FELLOW SHIPMATES AT THE DICE!

THE NEXT DAY, ABOARD CONAN'S COMMANDEERED VESSEL...
KING, OR NO, HE'S PIRATED OUR CRAFT!
NOW GRAB YOUR STEEL AND STAND READY, LADS!
AND SOON...
NO SIGN YET OF THE BONES AND A BLADE, MY LORD.
THIT
THIT
WHAT BLASTED--?!
WE VEER BACK TO PORT, OR--
CROM! A DEVILISH MUTINY, IS IT?
20

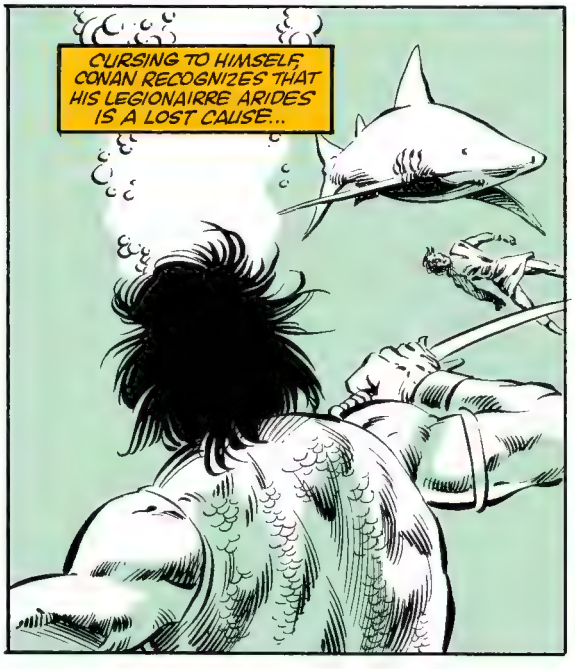

AYE, 'LESS YOU WANT TO YIELD WITHOUT A FIGHT.
YIELD?! HO, KNAVES, WE'LL SWAB THE DECKS WITH YOUR STINKING BLOOD--
--AND RAISE THE SAILS WITH YOUR GUTS AS HALYARDS!
NOW, WOULD YOU PUT A SHAFT IN MY BACK...
...WITH THAT UNMANLY BOW OF YOURS, YOU SON OF A SHE-DEVIL?
THIK
21

LET'S SEE IF YOUR AIM HOLDS *AFTER* I SPLIT THAT RAT-FACED SKULL OF YOURS!
CHUK
THAT KICK SHOULD HAVE THROWN YOU TO THE PLANKS--?!
THAK
MITRA! YOU SWING AND DODGE LIKE A BLASTED JUNGLE APE!

WHAAM!
THUD
CROM! THAT SWINE'S GOT ARIDES BACKED TO THE RAIL!
KONK
=OOPH=

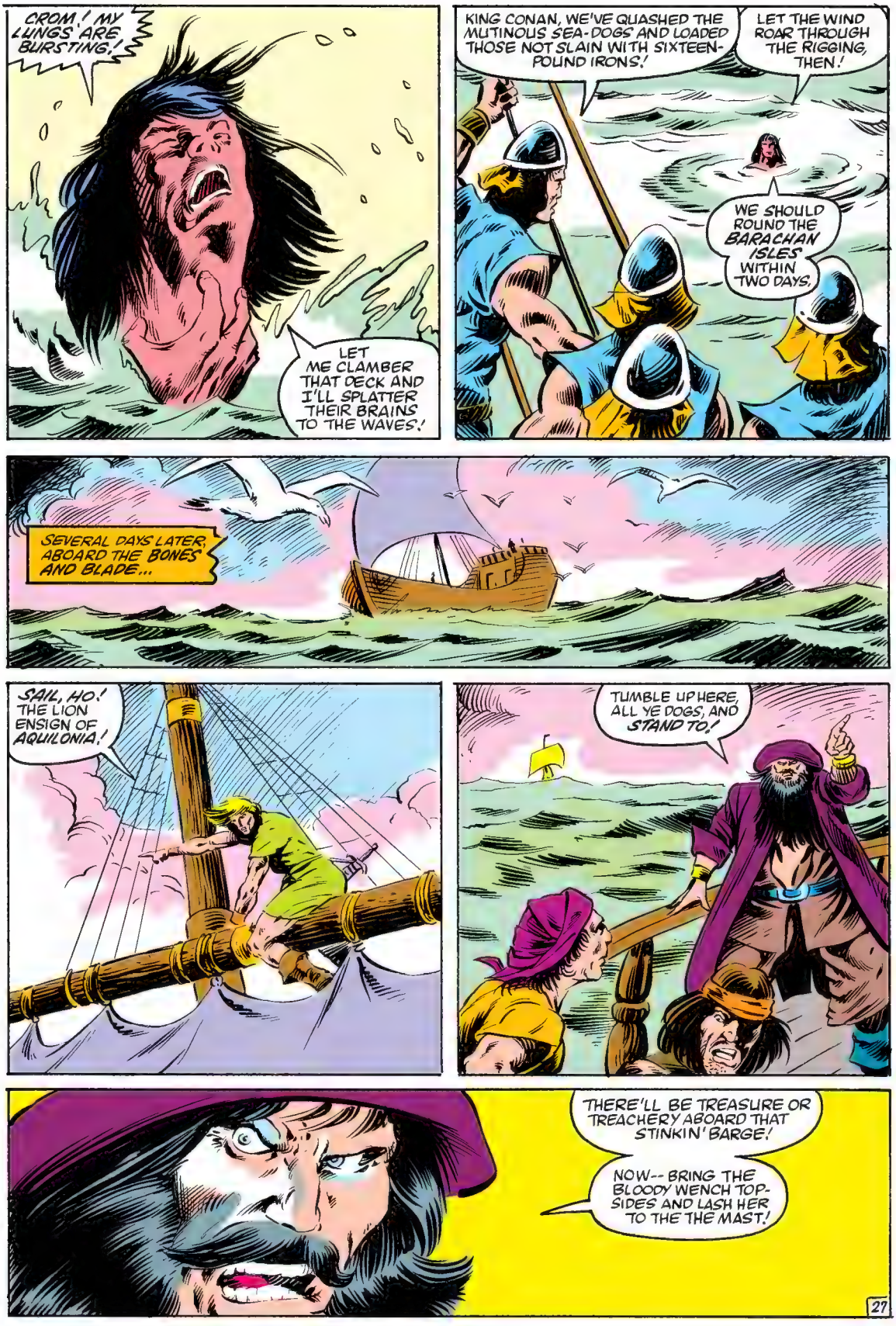
PLASH!
BLASTED BLACKGUARDRY!
I'LL NOT LEAVE ARIDES TO THE COLD FATHOMS!

GRLAAGH


CURSING TO HIMSELF, CONAN RECOGNIZES THAT HIS LEGIONAIRRE ARIDES IS A LOST CAUSE...

... AND HE BRACES HIMSELF FOR THE SWIFT MAN-EATER--

THE JAGGED SHARK'SKIN RIPS HIS FLESH LIKE THORNS...
...BUT THE KING FIGHTS SAVAGELY...
...PLUNGING KEEN STEEL THROUGH RUBBERY CARTILAGE...
...BLEEDING THE SEA-DEVIL TO PIECES.


CROM! MY LUNGS ARE BURSTING!
LET ME CLAMBER THAT DECK AND I'LL SPLATTER THEIR BRAINS TO THE WAVES!
KING CONAN, WE'VE QUASHED THE MUTINOUS SEA-DOGS AND LOADED THOSE NOT SLAIN WITH SIXTEEN-POUND IRONS!
LET THE WIND ROAR THROUGH THE RIGGING, THEN!
WE SHOULD ROUND THE BARACHAN ISLES WITHIN TWO DAYS,
SEVERAL DAYS LATER, ABOARD THE BONES AND BLADE...
SAIL, HO! THE LION ENSIGN OF AQUILONIA!
TUMBLE UP HERE, ALL YE DOGS, AND STAND TO!
THERE'LL BE TREASURE OR TREACHERY ABOARD THAT STINKIN' BARGE!
NOW-- BRING THE BLOODY WENCH TOPSIDES AND LASH HER TO THE THE MAST!

HA! WE'LL GIVE YER AQUILONIAN SCUM A GOOD SIGHT O' THEIR ROYAL WENCH!
... SO THEY CAN SEE YE BLEED IF THE RANSOM'S NOT PLEASIN' TA IRON BONES.
WHAT GAIN'S THERE IN KILLING THE QUEEN, IRON BONES?
LEAVE HER SAFE IN THE HOLD.
IF THERE'S BATTLE TO BE HAD, WE CAN SETTLE HER FATE AFTER--
IS ME BOLDEST JACK-TAR GOIN' SOFT OVER A LITTLE MISSY?
THE WENCH STAYS PUT, DOG!
ON GUARD, IRON BONES!
BY THE CUSTOM OF THE COAST I CHALLENGE YOU FOR THIS CRAFT AND CREW!
ME?!
WHY, I'LL CUT OUT YER HEART, YE TRAIT'ROUS RAT, AND SEND YER BLOODY CARCASS TO THE BOTTOM O' THE DEEP!

DAMNATION SEIZE MY SOUL--
--IF I GIVE YOU QUARTER, DOG!
NAY-- THE DEVIL PLUCK MY HEART IF I BEG ANY, IRON BONES!
SNIK!
YAARGH!
BLAST YER EYES, YE SON OF A SEA-HOUND! I'VE WASTED ENOUGH BLOODY TIME--
NOW I'LL SEE THE COLOR OF YER INNARDS!

CLINK
HA! SEA-SCUM! YE DOES WHEEZE LIKE A CREAKIN' OAR LOCK!
DROP TO THE DECK SO'S I CAN CRACK YER BACKBONE LIKE A MOLDY PLANK--
NESTOR--
NEVER, IRON BONES!
SWISH-SS
NOT BEFORE MY BLADE SENDS THE WIND WHISTLING...
...THROUGH YOUR BROAD BELLY, CUR!
STAB

YAARGH! CONFOUND YE FER A BLOODY--
TUMP
--SEA-RAT!
THUD
MITRA BE PRAISED!
OVER THE RAIL WITH HIM!
AYE, AYE SIR!
ALL HANDS STAND BY FOR THE LION OF AQUILONIA LOOKS TO LOCK US IN BATTLE!
BY LAW OF THE SEA YOU BELONG TO THE SHIP ZENOBIA, AND YOUR RANSOM TO THE ENTIRE CREW. I'VE NO AUTHORITY TO RETURN YOU TO CONAN.
NOR WOULD I IF I COULD.
I'M GOING TO FIGHT CONAN FOR YOU!
NO!

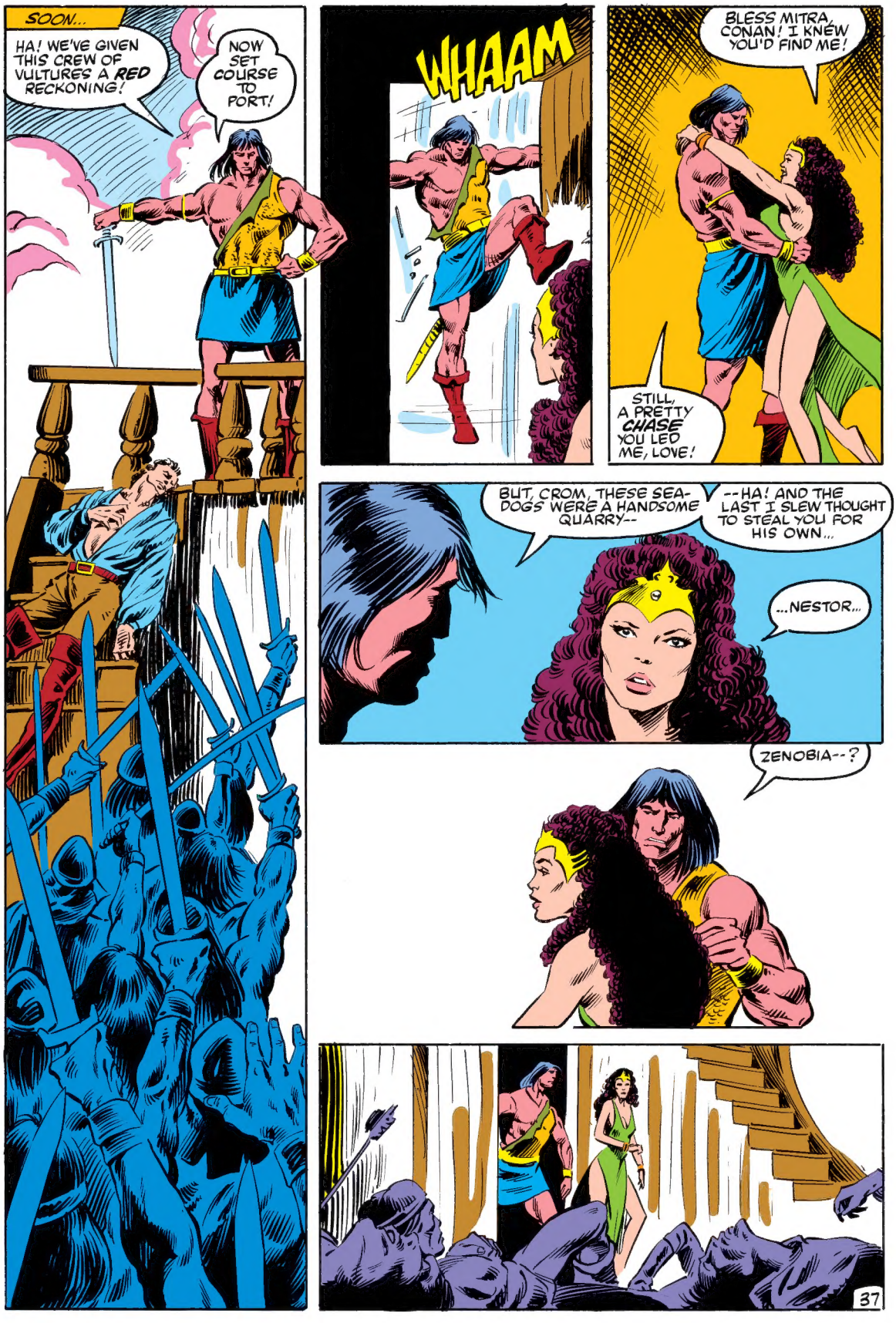
NO--
CAECUS, TAKE QUEEN ZENOBIA BELOW OUT OF HARM'S WAY AND SHIELD HER WITH YOUR VERY LIFE.
AYE-AYE, CAP'N.
AT THAT MOMENT...
MOVE! PASS OUT ARMS!
IS IT WISE, MY LIEGE, TO ARM THE CREW AFTER AN ATTEMPTED MUTINY?
FEAR NOT FOR YOUR DOG'S-SOUL, SAILOR.
I'LL SCUTTLE THIS TUB 'TIL SHE LIES OVER UPON HER BEAM-ENDS.
THEN CROM TAKE THE FOOL WHO'LL NOT FIGHT LIKE AN INFERNAL DEMON TO TAKE THE BONES AND BLADE--
--WHILE HIS OWN CRAFT IS SINKING!

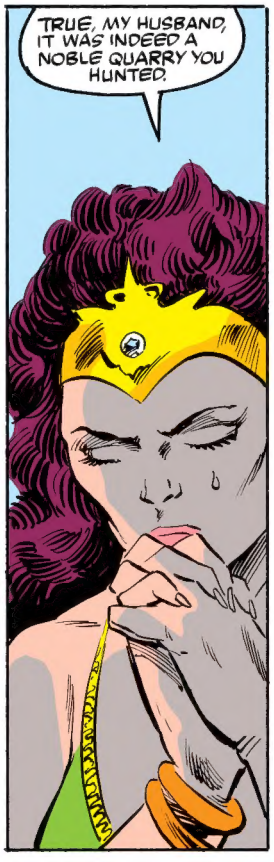
CRAASH
PLAASH
CRAANSH
NOW, CROM'S DEVILS, JUMP TO IT!
GRAPPLING HOOKS AND BLADES TO THE READY! THEIR CAPTAIN'S MINE--ABOVE ALL, THE QUEEN MUST NOT BE HARMED!

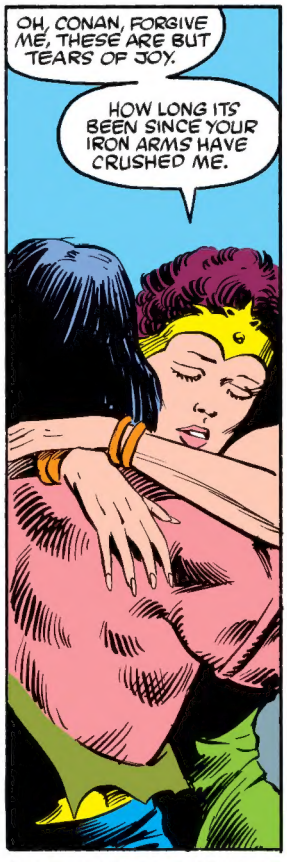
BUUNK
MEN OF AQUILONIA-- ATTACK!
WHERE IS SHE, JACKALS?
WHERE'S MY QUEEN?!
ANSWER ME, SWINE!

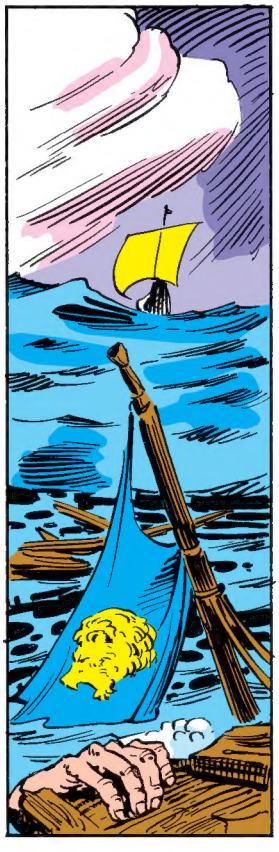
FALL TO, MEN! SHAVE THE CLAWS OFF AQUILONIA'S LION CUBS!
HO! SO I'VE FOUND THE MANGY CAPTAIN OF THIS TUB!
I'LL HAVE MY QUEEN.
SUCH A BEAUTY DESERVES BETTER THAN YOU.
YOUR BLOOD RUNS HOT AFTER BATTLE, AQUILONIAN, RATHER THAN ZENOBIA'S FEMININE CHARMS!
YOU STOLE YOUR CROWN; YOU STOLE HER LOVE...
...YOU DESERVE NEITHER.
YOU SPEAK RIDDLES.
THE TRUE RIDDLE IS HOW ONE SO BEAUTIFUL AND NOBLE OF SPIRIT...
COULD GIVE HER LOVE TO ONE SO FOUL.

TALK! TALK! TALK!
BUT I'LL SEE YOU HOISTED BY THE ARMS--
--AND DRUBBED WITH A NAKED CUTLASS FOR YOUR RANSOM!
NAY, CONAN, I FIGHT FOR NO RANSOM BUT ZENOBIA HERSELF!
...ZENOBIA...?
CROM! INSOLENT SWINE!
THAK
SKLIT
TO THE DEVIL'S DUNGHEAPS WITH YOU!


SOON...
HA! WE'VE GIVEN THIS CREW OF VULTURES A RED RECKONING!
NOW SET COURSE TO PORT!
WHAAM
BLESS MITRA, CONAN! I KNEW YOU'D FIND ME!
STILL, A PRETTY CHASE YOU LED ME, LOVE!
BUT, CROM, THESE SEA-DOGS WERE A HANDSOME QUARRY--
--HA! AND THE LAST I SLEW THOUGHT TO STEAL YOU FOR HIS OWN...
...NESTOR...
ZENOBIA--?







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JIM OWSLEY
EDITOR

Dear KING CONAN Crew,

Well, I must say I've been prompted to write before, but after just finishing KING CONAN #17 I suddenly became compelled to write. In fact, issue #17 has got to be the best since the incredible *"Bones Of The Brown Man"* back in issue #9. I get a fresh new feeling from the mag, and personally feel this to be the best written story so far. There have also been some amazingly good openings made in this story which could indeed lead to some interesting developments. Primarily I speak of Conan and Conn's attraction to Ayelet and its effect on Conan's family life. I'm also intrigued by Ayelet, as I'm sure most other readers are. She's strong and fierce, yet very compassionate. I certainly hope we can look forward to seeing more of her.

Anyway, keep up the fantastic work. It's good to see the quality of the comic go up. More power to Mr. Zelenetz and Mr. Buscema!

Stan Cowan
Halifax, Nova Scotia

We're glad you liked our new woman warrior, Stan. You can count on seeing a lot more of her in the future. In fact, Ayelet next returns in KING CONAN #21... to attend a funeral.

Cimmerians:

KING CONAN is fascinating to me because it shows how well said Cimmerian has aged. It makes me wonder whether his companions in arms of years past have done as well. It would be particularly interesting to have one red-haired she-devil visit Aquilonia's monarch, or will they call her *Gray* Sonja by then...?

Dale Norman Robertson
University of Maryland

Rule *nothing* out, Dale. Although we make no promises, let's just say that suspense is good for the soul. And they wouldn't *dare* call her "Gray".

Gentlebeings:

KING CONAN #16's *"Blood Of Aquilonia"* was very nice. Marc Silvestri and Ricardo Villamonte did a very capable job with the artwork. I'd like to see them continue for a few more issues to see how they fare.

My main concern is with the writing. Always has, always will be. I'm no expert as far as the artwork goes; I just know what I like and what I don't. But where words are concerned, well, I make part of my living by the pen too.

Alan, I like your stuff. *"Blood Of Aquilonia"* was a very good story to herald your debut as scripter for KING CONAN. Although the barbarian king facing rebellion and upsurpers plot is starting to get a little monotonous, combining it with the rite-of-passage/see-the-world experiences of Prince Conn was an excellent idea. My only complaint is I think the story should have been spread over a couple more issues, allowing the reader to more fully experience Conn's awakening to the way other people live. Also allows for better development of mystery and intrigue as King Conan tries to learn the truth behind the rebellion, with a nice buildup towards the climax and denouement.

But, as it is, KING CONAN #16 was quite well done, and I look forward to future issues written by Zelenetz.

Gregg Chamberlain
Burns Lake, B.C.

Gregg, if you thought issue #16 was good... well, stay tuned for things yet undreamed of beginning in the very next issue. Our creative team of Alan Zelenetz and Marc Silvestri have warmed up to the task of chronicling the history of Hyboria's most barbarously unconventional king. It all starts here, next issue. You have been warned.

Dear Jim,

I have been reading KING CONAN since the first issue hit the stands. I really enjoy it. I realize in many movies and comics created from books that liberties are taken, but Conan in general has stayed very close to the Robert E. Howard books. However, since reading KING CONAN I've noticed something I finally had to ask about. Queen Zenobia is very beautifully portrayed, but she has brown hair. In *Conan The Avenger* by Howard, Nyberg, and DeCamp, it says she has black hair. Is there a reason for this?

Don't misunderstand me, I do hope you take *some* liberties with Howard's original storylines, as that would, in my opinion, lead to a longer and more exciting series. Thank you for the good work.

Debra Summers
Webb City, MO

Thank you for the good *letter,* Debra. Zenobia's hair color change was indeed one of a few minor changes we've made in the Howard legend (like King Conan's lack of ε beard), for reasons of clarity and/or storytelling. Adapting anything from one medium to another almost always involves the taking of certain liberties, and KING CONAN is no excepetion. As to the *extent* of how much KING CONAN will differ from *Conan Of Aquilonia* and *Conan Of The Isles* (the two paperbacks between which KING CONAN's tales occur)... well, just keep reading, Debra. You're in for a few surprises.

Dear Marvel,

In KING CONAN #16 I was very happy to see Conn have a large part. I would like to see more of Conn in future issues. He should have a larger part because he's Conan's son.

Adam Gesle
Edmonton, Alberta

Dear KING CONAN Crew,

I really like KING CONAN, and one of the things I like about it is Prince Conn. Well, lately Conn hasn't been looking too super. I liked him best in KING CONAN #12, page 9. He is riding into the city with his sword tutor, and he looks great! He looks strong and young. But in KING CONAN #16, Conn looks super old, like his father. Then, in #17, he looks young again! I don't mean to sound overly critical, but what gives?

Patty K.G.
Menlo Park, CA

Well, Patty, over the course of the past year and a half or so, we've been quietly "aging" the young prince from twelve or so years old to where we see him now, about age sixteen. Back in issue #17, when Big John Buscema heroically stepped in to save us all from the Dreaded Deadline Doom, he pencilled the young prince as he'd always drawn him years before, as a boy of twelve. As usual, our keen, ever-vigilant, faithful post-MMMS True Believing readers have more on the ball than ye editors, and for your letter Patty a No-Prize your way comes. Gee... can't sneak anything past you people, can we...?

Incidentally, all you Prince Conn fans, see below for a special announcement, and, whatever you do, don't miss next issue. See you in sixty.

THE PRINCE IS DEAD

Once in a very blue moon you get the chance to do something great. Not just great, but Great. With a capital "G". What I mean is, an accomplishment of lasting value that makes people sit up and take notice. Something that leaves the competition staring with their mouths open. **KING CONAN #20** is just such an accomplishment.

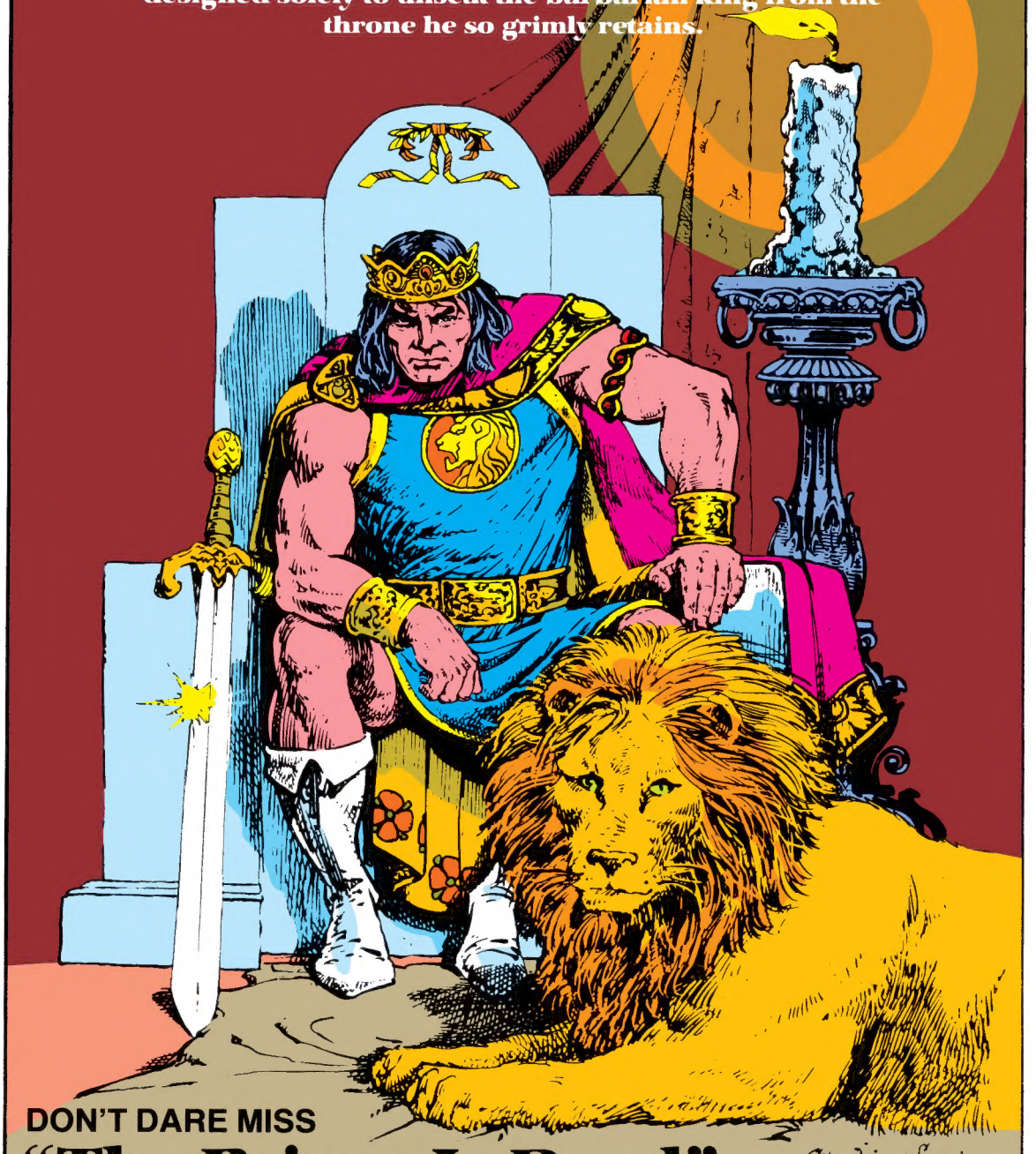
For the past ten months, **Alan Zelenetz, Marc Silvestri** and I have been hammering out a new look and a fresh, new concept for **KING CONAN**; one that would breathe new life into the series as well as chart new ground. Next issue begins the awesome saga of Conan's latter reign as king. Treacherous court intrigue, scheming malefactors, wars and rumors of wars are all brought to bear in coming issues as the greying Cimmerian's past finally catches up to him. Take nothing for granted, folks. This is Conan as you've *never* seen him. Fasten your seat belts.

It all begins next issue. In sixty days, the fruits of nearly a year's labor will roll off the press and race towards your local newsstand. Don't miss this one, people. This is destined to be the collector's item issue that all future issues of **KING CONAN** will be compared with. Get together with a few of your friends and find out the truck route from Sparta, Illinois to your local store. Form checkpoints along the way to insure unimpeeded delivery to your neighborhood. I don't care how you do it, but DON'T MISS NEXT ISSUE! Buy at *least* one copy. Treat someone you love (or at least are mildly acquainted with) to a copy. They'll thank you for it.

What I'm trying to say here (and have been saying for six months now) is if you've never been into sword and sorcery before; if you never thought a barbarian book was for you, we're out to prove you dead wrong. This is *still* the Marvel Age of comics. Accept no mohawked substitutes.

Jim Owsley

On September 6, 1983 Stan Lee and the Marvel Comics Group will release a double-sized, epic-length tale that will transport you back to a time long lost, and beyond your wildest imaginings. An age undreamed of, where a man often called a thief, reaver, and slayer rules the mightiest kingdom of the realm, having treaded the jeweled thrones of the earth under his sandaled feet. This tale marks a new beginning, an unspeakable end, and the outset of a reign of terror designed solely to unseat the barbarian king from the throne he so grimly retains.



DON'T DARE MISS

"The Prince Is Dead"

KING CONAN #20. ON SALE EVERYWHERE.

Silvestri and Severin